



Hot Waste Topics

Currently, there are over 400 nuclear power reactors operating in 25 countries around the world. Handling the thousands of tons of waste generated by these facilities has become one of the most contentious environmental problems of this century. Accordingly, many companies, research firms, regulatory agencies, and advocacy groups have become involved with seeking a solution to the radioactive waste problem, and many of these groups post data and information on the Internet. The task of cataloging the thousands of sites related to radioactive waste production and disposal has been undertaken at RadWaste.org, home of the WasteLink index, available on the World Wide Web at <http://www.radwaste.org>.

The WasteLink index organizes all the radioactive waste-related sites on the Internet into a hierarchical directory scheme, much the way companies such as Yahoo! and Netscape attempt to organize all Internet sites. WasteLink currently contains over 4,100 links to radioactive waste Web sites, organized into 29 categories. Whether the question is how to calculate effective doses for radiation exposures or where the worst radioactive pollution problems in Russia are, WasteLink provides an excellent place to begin searching for information.

Links to the 29 site categories are listed on the left side of the WasteLink home page. The first of these categories, labeled General, gives visitors access to sites that provide an overview of worldwide radioactive waste generation, nuclear safety, and waste management. To keep visitors aware that the information linked to this page comes from a wide variety of sources and therefore may not be objective, WasteLink assigns each link an icon that designates whether the corresponding site generally supports or opposes nuclear energy or is neutral or sponsored by the government.

RadWaste.org

Specific information on nuclear activities in each of 45 countries is available via the National Profiles link on the home page. For the most part, this information is provided by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency and the international Nuclear Energy Agency. WasteLink lists nine categories that deal with more specific aspects of the radioactive waste issue. The Radwaste Processing link, for example, leads to sites concerned with procedures such as stabilization, packaging, and vitrification of nuclear waste. Information on environmental remediation and restoration projects is available among the links in the Decommissioning Issues category. The sites listed under the Health Physics Issues category give users access to health information such as data on Japanese victims of radiation exposure and facts about the health risks associated with radon. Other categories dealing with specific waste issues are Radwaste Storage, Radwaste Disposal, Radwaste Handling Procedures, Radwaste Characterization, Radwaste Transportation, and Mixed Waste Issues.

The WasteLink home page provides links to directories of government agencies and to sites dealing with nuclear waste regulations for many countries and some U.S. states. Standards that have been set by various governmental and professional agencies but that are not part of the corpus juris can be found through the links on the Nuclear Standards page.

Among the other resources in the WasteLink index are directory pages for organizations involved in radioactive waste management, including nuclear research centers, waste management companies, technical consultants, professional societies, and environmental organizations. The Nuclear Power Utilities link leads to a directory of 226 nuclear power plants. Listings in this directory include a link to each of the following (if available): the home page of the company that operates the plant, the home page of the plant itself, technical information about the plant, and information on the plant posted by government, industry, or anti-nuclear groups. Still another directory, Technical Journals & Publishers, lists journals, magazines, and publishers that address radioactive waste issues.

The Events & Conferences link leads to a regularly updated list of gatherings of interest to radioactive waste professionals, including the Symposium on Technologies for the Management of Radioactive Wastes, which begins August 29 in South Korea. Other calendars of events, such as those maintained by the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission and the International Atomic Energy Agency, are also linked to this page. In addition, WasteLink also provides links to the proceedings of past conferences.

For quicker navigation of the WasteLink site, a site map and search engine are also available. The expansive WasteLink search page also includes links to other search engines, radioactive waste indexes, and various other pages of related links. If visitors find that WasteLink has failed to list a radioactive waste site in any of its indexes, a form is provided to submit the URL for inclusion in the directory.